

## **WorkFirst Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) Standards**

**05/03/06**

1. The WorkFirst Comprehensive Evaluation will be conducted statewide as a partnership effort, with DSHS, ESD and the local community or technical colleges as mandatory participants in the process. CJ contractors and/or other local partners may also participate in the process as decided upon locally.
2. The elements of the Comprehensive Evaluation will be offered consistently statewide, as described in these standards. Parents will be directed to the evaluation consistently statewide. Decisions about parents' employment pathway activities will be made objectively, based on their evaluation results and the criteria for approval.
3. The time for completion of the TANF application process, the comprehensive evaluation, interpretation of the results, writing an IRP based on the results and having the parent begin participation in an employment pathway will be 30 calendar days or less. Completion times will be monitored.
  - a. The process from TANF application until determination of TANF eligibility will take an average of 11 days.
  - b. The entire comprehensive evaluation, from completion of the foundation portion through the completion of the employment plan with recommendations for employment pathways, will take 10 business days.
4. Parents will be referred to the CE each time they apply for TANF, including returners (those who are coming back to TANF within six months of exiting.) The expert partner agency will determine, based on previous CE information and the circumstances since leaving TANF, whether new testing is necessary. However, the eJAS documentation must be completed each time a parent is referred to CE, but may include information from a previous CE, when appropriate.
5. Parents will be provided support services and child care if they need them to participate in the comprehensive evaluation. Information and referral to child care will be provided early in the process as part of Positive Prevention Services to ensure that parents can participate in the CE without delay. In addition, transportation needs will be addressed at this point, and support services provided as needed.
6. All applicants who have been determined eligible for TANF, with the following exceptions, will be directed to complete all or a portion of the comprehensive evaluation:
  - LEP pathways parents, who will participate in an evaluation conducted by the service provider
  - Minor parents
  - Child only cases
  - Parents determined to be exempt from WorkFirst participation for reasons defined in RCW. (However, the opportunity to complete the evaluation will be offered and exempt parents will be referred if they choose to participate in the evaluation.)
7. The small number of parents who are unable to immediately complete the CE because of an urgent issue, such as family safety, will be directed to the social worker for assessment and services straightway. The social worker will address the immediate need as well as determine whether the parent can complete the remainder of the

comprehensive evaluation at that time. The parent will be directed to complete the remainder of the comprehensive evaluation as soon as he or she is able.

8. There are some parents who do not have immediate or urgent needs, but who will be referred to the social worker, either by policy (pregnant parents, for example) or because of family circumstances and a need for services. The social worker will conduct the social services assessment as part of the CE, and the parent will also continue to participate in the other portions of the CE as directed.
9. An initial Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) will be developed for the parent indicating when and where to participate in the comprehensive evaluation process.
10. Final decisions about employment pathway activities and other activities will be made after all of the evaluation results are available and the complete picture can be seen. Decisions will be made objectively and consistently, based on the program policy criteria.
11. A parent who has not previously received a comprehensive evaluation, who is referred back to the DSHS case manager because he or she is not making progress in the assigned activity will be directed to the comprehensive evaluation prior to having his or her IRP rewritten to ensure engagement in the most appropriate activities.
12. The foundation portion of the evaluation and the social services assessment, as needed, will be conducted at the CSO. The remainder of the comprehensive evaluation elements will be conducted at the WorkSource Center, in most local areas. Local partners will ensure that adequate evaluation opportunities are available to accommodate the parents' needs and the program's standards. Variations in locations may occur depending upon local resources.
13. The results from all of the elements of the comprehensive evaluation will be documented in eJAS by all of the partners immediately upon completion of the section of the evaluation. Each partner staff person will use the objective program policy criteria to document activity options in their section of the evaluation notes.
14. The specific required elements of the comprehensive evaluation are listed below. Parent engagement and active participation in all of the elements, including the interpretation of results, is mandatory.
  - The foundation evaluation that focuses on the family's situation and elements relevant to the participant which adds context to the remainder of the evaluation.
  - Returner's evaluation: Reason for return, what helped before, what needs to be done differently this time?
  - Social services assessment, as needed.
  - Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) appraisal for basic education.
  - Brief educational evaluation of education achieved and educational interests
  - Work Skill Evaluation.
  - Labor Market Information linking the evaluation results with options for the parents.
  - Interpretation of the evaluation results, and building an Employment Plan, including input from the parent, for the DSHS worker to build an IRP and make referrals from. This includes objective application of the criteria to determine who will be referred to basic education, Community Jobs and the other approved WorkFirst activities.

15. IRPs will be developed with the parents and based on the results and recommendations from the comprehensive evaluation (Employment Plan) and consideration of any special records information. Decisions will be made objectively and consistently, based on program policy criteria.
16. The expectation is that all activities are preparing parents to go to work. IRPs will be developed to find the best mix of activities, including those who are participating in issue resolution activities. Parents will be expected to participate full-time.
17. Community Jobs (CJ) referrals will be made only for the hardest to place clients. Based on the comprehensive evaluation results, CJ will be an option for those parents that have participated in other activities and have not been successful or where other activities may not be deemed appropriate.
18. When a parent is referred back to the DSHS case manager for non-participation (not showing up for appointments, not doing assignments, etc.), a good cause determination will be made, including why the parent did not phone in to get an excused absence.
  - a. If good cause is found and the situation is stable, the parent will be referred back to the same activity.
  - b. If good cause is not found, the sanction process will be initiated and attempts to reengage the parent will be made.
  - c. The vast majority of parents will be referred to the same activities they dropped out of, to cure their sanction.
19. The partner agency staff person who refers a parent back to the case manager must document adequately the reasons for the referral back and all other information relevant to the situation.